to wartime efficiency. But these years did produce an entirely palatable and widespread interest in health foods.

Although a number of cooks and food writers, beginning with Katrine Mackay during the 1920s, emphasized the relevance of lighter Mediterranean and Asian cooking, the drive to modern culinary diversity was more a product of the late 1960s and 1970s as new migrants came in, more New Zealanders travelled and television alerted us to the possibilities of the wider world. Now the variety of distinct cuisines, fusions, ingredients, eateries and cookbooks is seemingly endless. As diet and work patterns changed, the mountains of baking gradually retreated.

This history could have been written with more contextual and statistical detail — such as levels of production and consumption of particular commodities or analysis of the changing protein economy — but this would rather undermine David Veart's achievement in presenting a more personal and conversational journey through a unique archive. Unlike most other themes in New Zealand history one is genuinely inspired to try this one at home.

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Australia's Empire. Edited by Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward. Oxford University Press, New York, 2008. xiii + 419pp. US price: $70.00. ISBN 978-0-19-927373-7.

AFTER GLANCING AT THE TITLE, but before looking over the contents of this book, serious students of Australian history might suppose that it is all about Australia's interests in Oceania; that it will deal with that country's increasing influence over the peoples of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia; and that it will trace Australia's role in the region from the development of several Australasian colonies' Monroe Doctrine of the South Pacific in the late nineteenth century to Australia's role as the United States's deputy sheriff in this part of the world today. While the editors of this lengthy tome are quite conscious that this is part of their story they seem unaware that the title is misleading. Their attempt to justify it (p.9) is far from convincing; the principal reason for it appears to be simply that the book is one volume of a companion series entitled the Oxford History of the British Empire and the editors were saddled with what they were given.

What, then, *is* the book about? According to the editors it is to do with the British Empire in Australia from its sudden beginnings in the late eighteenth century to its slow decline in the mid and late twentieth century and beyond. They herald it as 'a wide-ranging assessment of Australia's imperial experience' (p.7). Herein lies the root of perhaps one of the book's major faults: it simply tries to do too much and has too many foci. The principal questions the editors pose are: in what ways was what came to be known as Australia incorporated into the British Empire and what impact did that empire have on the continent? But the questions they answer are more to do with the 'loss' rather than the establishment of the empire in Australia. What became of the British Empire here? Did the stimulus for its decline come from Australia, the UK, or both? What are 'the material and cultural legacies' (p.22) of the British Empire in Australia? And, of course, those most perennial of questions: what has it meant — and what does it now mean — to be an Australian? There are many others, and one gets the sense that many contributors found it difficult to focus simply because they were required to address more questions than they could sensibly answer.

These contributors number 17, and most would not be out of place in a *Who's Who* of Australian historians. Few if any are trying to establish a reputation by publishing in a prestigious publication. Rather, most are professors/associate professors — some retired

— who are summarizing decades of their own reading, research and writing in particular fields of Australian history. Who better, for instance, than Alan Atkinson to write about early colonial Australia or Ann Curthoys to focus on the impact of the earliest British settlers on indigenous Australians? Richard Waterhouse looks at settling the land, while Anne Gray discusses the development of Australian art. The above make up 'Contact: The Projection of Empire' — the first of the book's three sections.

The second section is 'Dynamics: The Instruments of Empire' in which John Hirst analyses the development of the constitutional relationship between Australia and Britain; Eric Richards discusses not only British immigration into but also British emigration from Australia; Hilary Carey pens a chapter entitled 'Religion and Society' (which is referred to in its page headings as 'Religion and Identity'); Geoffrey Bolton — who must be drawing on something like 40–50 years' experience — writes about the economic relationship between Australia and Britain; and Stuart Ward produces the inevitable contribution on the defence relationship.

In the third section Mark McKenna, writing about the monarchy, uses this unlikely subject to pen possibly the most interesting chapter in a somewhat weighty collection; the only other contenders are Richard White and Hsu-Ming Teo, who have the advantage of writing about popular culture. Joy Damousi writes about Australia's wars and how they have been commemorated, and Angela Woollacott talks about gender and sexuality. Neville Meaney, who one would expect to be writing about the Monroe Doctrine for the South Pacific, instead offers a discussion of how empire has been reflected in, and has faded from, Australian historiography.

These are substantial offerings; each of the book's 15 central chapters is about 12,000 words. Inevitably, all authors base their contributions on recent secondary sources, often what they have written themselves. While all provide brilliant insights, not all gather them together in a readily discernible and memorable argument. The vocabulary of many, too, makes one wonder about present-day history writing. Terms like 'anchored', 'interface', 'continuities', 'contested' and 'emblematic' seem inescapable today, while words like 'lens', 'trajectory' and, most of all, 'resonance', incline one to think Australian historians are trying too hard to conform to and communicate in a specialized language.

To be blunt, this collection, by most scholarly criteria very impressive, was not produced for popular consumption. Alan Atkinson's conceptual scheme is not easy to appreciate and Angela Woollacott's phraseology at times approaches the excruciating. But the worst offenders are probably the editors themselves. Typical, for instance, is a statement which refers to how 'the self-legitimating blinkers of an imperial perspective had been replaced by a more insistently national, post-colonial framework' (p.5). That one *can* write clearly and entertainingly in this genre is demonstrated in recent British works such as Roy Douglas's *Liquidation of Empire* (2002) and Niall Ferguson's *Empire* (2003). Surely it would not be cultural cringe for Australian historians to emulate their style.

In other ways, too, this is very much a product of Australian historiography around the turn of the twenty-first century. The theme of frontier violence between British settlers and black indigenous Australians is raised in several contributions and there is no doubt as to what stand Schreuder and Ward take on the still simmering Reynolds–Windschuttle debate. In their concluding chapter they write that '[e]vidence of armed conflict and fierce Aboriginal resistance abounded' (p.401) and that 'the settlers' claim to the continent' was not based on 'peaceful acquisition'. Yet nowhere in this book's several hundred pages do they or anyone else provide this evidence and clearly demonstrate that Henry Reynolds and his 'school' have got it right and Keith Windschuttle has got it wrong.

As to existing works on the subject, the authors claim that '[t]he last comprehensive, collaborative study of the Empire in Australia' was part of *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* published exactly three quarters of a century ago (p.6). But are the two really comparable? After all, the earlier work, while also multi-authored, dealt with a different range of subjects and was written when the Empire was slowly being transformed into a Commonwealth; the present book tries to cover 'empire' in Australian history from many disparate perspectives.

What some readers will inevitably ask is whether this is just another history of Australia with the idea of the British Empire as its 'angle' or 'hook'. Regardless, it will be admired by historians and many of its chapters will be referred to in the profiles of any number of university courses in Australian history. One might quibble about how comprehensive it is and argue about the desirability of Australian higher education's mania for 'collaborative studies', but its principal faults are that it is too ambitious and the general reading public is not going to find all of it readily comprehensible.

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Tell It As It Is: Autobiography of Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, KBE, PC, Solomon Islands' First Prime Minister. By Peter Kenilorea. Edited by Clive Moore. Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies, Research Center for Humanities & Social Sciences, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, 2008. xxxvi + 516pp. Taiwan price: $NT700.00. ISBN 978-986-01-4498-7.

TELL IT AS IT IS IS THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY of Sir Peter Kenilorea, a senior statesman of the South Pacific with a long and distinguished career. As the Chief Minister of Solomon Islands (1976–1978) Kenilorea was a central figure in the preparation of this culturally and linguistically plural archipelago for independence from Britain in 1978. He was the chief negotiator and head of the Solomon Islands' delegation to the independence talks in London in 1977 and was the main architect of the Solomon Islands Constitution. He held the post of Prime Minister of Solomon Islands immediately after independence (1978–1980) and also on two subsequent occasions (1980–1981, 1984–1986). Since leaving politics in 1991, he has served as Director of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (1991–1994), acted as the Solomon Islands Ombudsman (1996–2001), and since 2001 has been Speaker of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands.

The book is divided into three sections. Section I relates Kenilorea's early life and education. Section II, the main body of the book, addresses his public service, engagement in national politics and participation in regional organizations. In the brief final section, Kenilorea concludes by describing his children's education and careers and outlining his philosophy of parenting. The book has two appendices. The first lays out Kenilorea's genealogy, and the second constitutes a highly useful historical reference tool, including comprehensive lists of Solomon Islanders who served on the advisory and legislative councils of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, as well as lists of the highest ranking colonial officers and national leaders since independence.

Kenilorea's narrative of his birth and earliest education is alive with the compelling combination of human agency and contingent events. His mother, according to a now near-legendary account, went into labour just as the villagers of Hiruware in the Are-are region of southern Malaita Island came under mistaken American aerial bombardment in 1943. Although his panic-stricken mother hid him in an ant-infested bamboo cluster, Kenilorea survived this unfriendly welcome into the world. His earliest education was equally hit or miss. A local Are-are man in a nearby village happened to open up a small school that, in 1955, enabled Kenilorea to pursue a strong desire to learn English. He was frustrated, however, by the lack of structured instruction at the school. Then, in the following year, colonial officials visited his village and prompted his teacher to select